

2005

Aid for Towns in the 14th Senate District

A very important part of my job representing the people of the 14th state Senate District is ensuring Milford, Orange and West Haven receive their fair share of state funding. I am pleased to report the following grants and reimbursements from the state:

Total Education Grants	\$48,428,499	This funding represents an increase of \$1,870,639 over last year's total.
Town Aid Road Fund (TAR)	\$724,088	
Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Grants	\$1,465,515	
Local Capital Improvements (LoCIP)	\$1,038,753	
Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT)	\$2,030,645	
Totals	\$53,687,500	

IMPORTANT SUCCESSES IN HEALTH CARE

Medical Malpractice

This year, the legislature went to work to address the medical malpractice crisis. We passed a bill designed to limit the growth of malpractice insurance rates while protecting patients' access to quality health care. The package includes:

- Increased patient safety measures, such as requiring hospitals to use better identification procedures and protocols before surgery
- Reforms to the judicial system, such as requiring mediation between the parties, to expedite these often-lengthy cases and reduce attorney costs
- A requirement that our state insurance commissioner consider companies' proposed rates before they are applied, with the power to approve, deny or modify them

This balanced approach addresses the issues brought to us by the insurance companies, doctors and lawyers involved in these cases, and most importantly, it works to improve the safety of patients in our state.

ConnPACE and Medicare Part D Coordination

Making sure seniors do not have to choose between groceries and buying their life-saving prescription drugs remains a top priority of mine. As vice chair of the Public Health Committee, I worked hard to ensure that ConnPACE benefits will be coordinated with the new federal Medicare Part D drug coverage, so participants do not pay any more than the ConnPACE registration fee and a prescription co-payment unless absolutely necessary. Please note that participants must enroll in a Part D plan by January 1, 2006.

Re-importation of Prescription Drugs

Many seniors already get their prescriptions filled in Canada and other countries because the same drugs can be bought much cheaper outside of the United States. This practice has been both cheered and derided, but I believe that we owe it to our seniors to take a look at any legitimate means by which people can afford to get the life-saving prescription drugs they need. I am a member of a working group established to conduct a feasibility study for purchasing prescription drugs or joining an existing program with other states that would enable Connecticut residents to purchase less expensive drugs from pharmacies in Canada or other countries.



a message
to my
constituents


Dear Friend and Neighbor:

I am pleased to write to you to share some of the highlights of what has been an exciting and productive first legislative session for me. As co-chair of the Veterans' Affairs Committee, I am happy to report that we passed new legislation to protect, support and honor the brave men and women who serve our country. I am particularly proud of the fact that all of our bills were developed and passed on a bipartisan and unanimous basis. As the vice chair of the Public Health Committee, we moved forward on initiatives that will improve the quality of health for all of the people in our state.

We increased aid to our cities and towns to support education and to keep our property taxes down. We increased our school readiness dollars while providing more money to towns for general and special education. We will work to get more of our money back from Washington. We saved our sub base and will continue the expansion of our economic development efforts.

There is a lot to be proud of and a lot to look forward to here in Connecticut. I encourage you to look through this report to learn more about this past session's work. Your views are important to me. I would appreciate if you would please take a moment to fill out the attached survey, so I can best represent you.

As always, if you need more information or if there is any way my office can help you, please feel free to contact me anytime.

With Warm Regards,

Gayle Slossberg
State Senator, 14th District

Home Phone 203-878-6412 E-mail Slossberg@senatedems.ct.gov

State Senator
Gayle Slossberg

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Vice Chair Public Health Committee
Member Appropriations Committee, Commerce Committee

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I'm proud
to represent the
14th state
Senate District
which includes
the communities
of Milford,
Orange and
West Haven

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What do you think?

I am already hard at work preparing for the next legislative session that begins in February. As part of this effort, I have included this short survey on three important issues likely to face the General Assembly. This survey will allow me to quickly register your priorities and learn if a broad consensus exists in our district. This survey is also available for you to fill out on my Web page (see address below). You are always welcome to write or call me with more detailed responses or thoughts on these and other issues.

Capitol Phone 1-800-842-1420 Home Phone 203-878-6412

Local school systems are struggling to fund new requirements imposed by the federal No Child Left Behind law. What should our state do to address the unfunded No Child Left Behind mandate?

- ☐ Sue the federal government for more funding and more flexibility
- ☐ Leave local school districts to decide how to cover the unfunded costs
- ☐ Raise taxes to help local districts pay for its costs
- ☐ Cut other governmental programs to increase funding for its implementation

We acted to address the state's recent budget shortfall and, as a result, it is possible our state will end this fiscal year with a surplus. If our state realizes a surplus in the coming fiscal year (FY06), what would you suggest we do with it?

- ☐ Return money to taxpayers in the form of local property tax relief
- ☐ Improve state's financial health by adding to the Rainy Day Fund
- ☐ Make health insurance affordable for more residents
- ☐ Invest in education
- ☐ Provide emergency assistance to residents for home heating oil

Below are some of the pressing issues facing the General Assembly. Please rank from 1 to 3 the three issues you feel are most important:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| ___ No Child Left Behind requirements | ___ Open space preservation |
| ___ Healthcare and insurance | ___ Jobs and the economy |
| ___ Transportation | ___ Crime and criminal justice |
| ___ Campaign finance reform | ___ Childhood obesity |
| ___ Gasoline prices | ___ Property tax relief |

Please trim off the survey portion of this newsletter, fold it in thirds, staple or tape it closed, and affix a 37¢ stamp before mailing back to me. This survey is also online at www.senatedems.ct.gov/Slossberg.html (click on the survey link). Many thanks in advance.

State Senator Gayle Slossberg
Room 3000
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

PLACE
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SENATOR GAYLE SLOSSBERG

Reforming the Ethics Commission

Our state continues to respond to the unprecedented events of last year, which were punctuated by the resignation of our former governor. This year, the General Assembly improved oversight of ethical conduct by establishing an independent Citizens' Ethics Advisory Board to better ensure that officials adhere to the highest ethical standards. We have also instituted an innovative approach to reviewing ethical behavior by assigning retired judges, titled Judge Trial Referees, to decide whether probable cause exists in cases involving unethical conduct.

Energy Independence

We constantly hear about rising energy prices across the nation and the effect they have on our everyday lives. Our increased electricity costs are primarily due to congestion on the system and too few generation plants in our state. We passed legislation this session establishing several initiatives to reduce these costs. These incentives include providing operating cost subsidies and long-term financing for certain customers if they install distributed generation facilities, which are run off the electric grid, such as fuel cells or micro-turbines. This bill-along with our conservation efforts-can make a big difference in our energy outlook.

Preserving Open Space, Promoting Agriculture

Connecticut has a long history of protecting and preserving its open space and farmland. This year we passed legislation establishing a matching grant program to help towns promote and sustain agricultural activity. This legislation also establishes a database for farmers who intend to sell their farm operations or farmland. People interested in starting or expanding an agricultural business can use the database to find the land or equipment they need. Lastly, the bill establishes a fund to help promote historic preservation, open space and agriculture.

Insurance Coverage for Infertility Treatments

A child can bring so much joy to the world, but for tens of thousands of people in Connecticut with fertility problems, having a child of their own has been an unreachable goal. Infertility is often treatable, but is often not covered by health

insurance plans. This session, the legislature voted to require Connecticut-regulated insurance companies to pay for certain fertility treatments. This legislation brings a new method to treating infertility, allowing couples to take an incremental approach to procedures, rather than jumping to the most expensive means first. Further specific information can be obtained from your insurance company.

Creating the Bi-State Long Island Sound Committee

Long Island Sound is one of Connecticut's greatest natural resources. Its fragile environment and unique beauty make it not only an economic asset, but also a recreational treasure. Since we share the Sound with New York, it's important that we work together to protect it. We passed legislation this session to create a new Bi-State Long Island Sound Committee responsible for recommending legislation to avoid and mitigate the impact of any potential industrialization of the Sound, such as the proposed Broadwater floating liquefied natural gas facility.

Transportation Initiative Seeks to Unlock Gridlock

With I-95, the Merritt Parkway, and many traffic-laden surface streets running through the 14th Senate District, and having spent many early mornings on Metro-North platforms speaking with commuters, I am acutely aware of the transportation crisis we face. This legislative session, I worked with my colleagues to improve safety, help alleviate highway gridlock, upgrade commuter rail and bus services and improve the state's prospects for economic growth through passage of legislation that provides \$1.3 billion towards a host of important transportation projects including:

- \$667 million for new Metro-North cars
- \$300 million for new rail maintenance facilities
- \$187 million to reduce traffic congestion on I-95
- \$150 million for improvements to I-84 and I-91
- \$7.5 million for new commuter buses



◀ I was pleased with the turnout in Milford for the first "Fill Out the Form Day," an event organized to help veterans obtain their benefits.

▶ In July, I spoke with Red Cross officials about the need for \$300,000 in state bonding to purchase several emergency response vehicles.

